6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

of the Czar, they became increasingly rank-conscious, domineering and abusive toward all lower in rank or under their power.[12]

Such a ruling class, with its open misrule and arbitrariness, could not inspire the subjected classes with confidence and respect. The lack of social and political security was manifested in want of initiative, in disinterest in productive activities, in loose morals, in hazard games, in a low value of human life, and in a general lack of trust.[13]

On the other hand, perhaps as a reaction to these conditions of insecurity and of social disorganization, there was an urge of complete renunciation of the world and its strife, an urge to detach oneself from the group, a tendency to isolate oneself completely from human society and seek personal consolation and personal salvation in religion. This trend of social withdrawal and self-oriented feelings brought about a great development of hermitism and of monastic life. Many of these people, completely detached from human society and preoccupied exclusively with their own self, sought peace and communion with God in lonely, remote depths of forests, in the solitude of the wilds and deserts. Here "far removed from men" they spent their lives in prayer, fasting and self-maceration.

At the same time the masses of the people who lived in great misery and who were exposed to arbitrariness, exploitation, and other forms of oppression on the part of the mighty, sought consolation and hope in supernatural forces. Beliefs in miraculous powers of wonder-working icons and in life-giving properties of the Cross were taking deep roots. On all sides sprang up prophecies and apparitions. Saint men and prophets, often mentally unbalanced, would appear in the streets and openly voice their protest against the Czar and his government.[14]

These were the only signs of an open opposition to the existing system that was becoming increasingly unbearable. Such "idiots" were considered saintly by the people not only because of their strange behavior and their ability to endure extremes of hardship, but also for their unheard of courage to speak openly against the Czar:

6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

ture was detrimental to the development of trade and industry. For centuries its economy remained founded on a system of primitive agriculture. Lack of large centers of trade and industry adversely affected rural economy. There was no stimulation for agricultural improvements and for freeing of the serfs. Instead, the emphasis was on the exploitation of serf labor as the most expedient means to satisfy the demands of the landlords and of the state. The landlords were mostly absent on military campaigns or other state duties and were generally disinterested in land improvements. At the same time the system of using the land as a pay for military or other state services, in a country whose war campaigns and military contingents were increasing, tended to diminish the size of the donations and increase the burdens imposed on the serfs.

The lack of urbanization, together with the low standard of education of the service nobility, kept also the intellectual development of Russia far behind that in the West. Intellectual activity was limited mainly to the court circles. The ideology and practices of the Russian Church favored intellectual stagnation. Russia accepted Christianity from Byzantium after the Greek Church had already given up classical traditions of Hellenism. By the time Byzantine Christianity entered Russia, Byzantine literature had assumed an almost exclusively ecclesiastical character, and education consisted almost entirely of religious teaching and the reading of the lives of the saints. Art, too, became exclusively religious and stereotyped. All thought was regimented according to religious dogmas and political objectives of the power-holders.

In Russia this type of intellectual rigidity and inactivity was emphasized because of the use of the Old-Slavonic language in the Church, which resulted in neglect of Greek language. And it was considered a sin to learn the "thrice accursed Latin tongue." Thus, the Russian clergymen became isolated from the West because they lacked the possession of the only instruments in which human knowledge was communicated in those days. Moreover, Russian Orthodoxy, like the Byzantine Orthodoxy, was based on monasticism. But unlike the manifold monastic practices of the Western Church, the monks in the Russian Church tended to lead an inactive life of asceticism aimed at personal salvation.

6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

[Bakunin]

[Saint Theodosius]

593 159 [668]

inspired him with an insensate hatred of every restriction on liberty."[8]

Identifying himself with all the oppressed, this leading Russian anarchist revolted not only against the family and the state, but against God as well, because God was a symbol of authority and fear. To Bakunin the concept of a God of fear implied abdication of reason and of justice, and was the negation of human liberty. He expounded therefore the overthrow of God as a necessary precondition of human liberation.[9] To Bakunin the revolt of Satan against God was the first attempt of free thought, of science, and of human freedom.[10]

Not unlike this was the reaction of Turgeniev toward the despotism of his mother. This outstanding Russian novelist apparently developed a great compassion for the Russian serfs and became a champion in the struggle for freedom and for the emancipation of the peasants because he identified his own sufferings with the plight of the muzhiks on the estate of his mother. Turgeniev's mother apparently gave vent both on her son and on her serfs for the sufferings of her unhappy married life, and in bringing up her own son she made few concessions. The same excessive strictness that she applied against serfs she exercised also against her own son. "I was flogged almost every day for merest trifles," says Turgeniev.[11]

[538]

593 159 792 ●

An earlier case of reaction against a despotic mother and resulting identification with those who are humiliated is that of Saint Theodosius. This Russian saint was one of the founders of Russian monasticism in the eleventh century. According to Fedotov, the main theme in the hagiography of Theodosius is the "strife with his mother . . . the cruel treatment he endured, and his threefold escape. Many scenes are painted with truly artistic skill, particularly the portrait sketched of the mother, with her passionate transitions from outbursts of anger to caresses, with her appearance as a virago: 'She was strong in body, vigorous as a man: anybody who would not have seen her but only heard her voice would believe it was that of a man.' "[12]

Theodosius reacted to the despotism of his mother by wearing "uncouth and patched garb" like the poor and the beggars to the dismay of his parents, who were well-to-do people and felt hor-

6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

[Saint Theodosius]

593 159 792 rified by such behavior. After his father's death, Theodosius used "to go to the fields with the slaves and work humbly."[13] Later when Theodosius finally escaped from his mother's tyranny by entering a monastery, he became the founder of that school of Russian monastic philosophy which emphasizes self-abnegation and meekness, as well as charitable love and compassion for those who suffer. In that manner Theodosius identified himself and his Church with all those who were tyrannized. But he was also active in protecting those to whom injustice was done. He became "intercessor for many before judges and princes, rescuing people."[14]

152 695 Deep sympathy for those who suffer and identification with them might explain why the Russian juries and the peasant courts were so ready to acquit the repentants. Juries and courts would often set free criminals who were found guilty by well established evidence. The verdict in such a case might be "not guilty" because of "commiseration for the poor murderer." A jury sitting through Holy Week would tend to acquit everybody, because "at the time of our Lord's Passion, it does not become Christians to condemn their brethren."[15]

152 538 Sympathy for those who suffer and identification with them is an outstanding trait of Russian literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Russian writings of those days exhibit a preoccupation with great social, political, religious and psychological problems of mankind. They picture a gloomy, painful, and tragic world, full of misery, injustice, blood and death. In the same manner the school textbooks of those days contained many heartbreaking stories full of compassion and commiseration for the suffering, unprotected, weak.

152 783 538 668 When identification with suffering is a manifestation of revolt or is combined with the urge for revolt, strong feelings of guilt might develop. On such grounds compulsion to suffer and to be persecuted might thrive. This "Russian Kenotism" is found among the early Russian monastics[16] as well as among the Russian nineteenth century revolutionaries and men of letters. Some Russian revolutionary factions, for instance, emphasized sacrifice and martyrdom to the point of self-destruction.[17] In the like manner Count Leo Tolstoy claims in his diary that he, "often

6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

178 In the new secularized and urbanized society, also, the position
565 of the clergy became increasingly precarious. Like other insti-
793 tutions of the Czardom the Russian Orthodox Church was organ-
ized along the lines of sharp social differentiation and domi-
nance-submission relationships. Russian Orthodox clergy as a
whole formed a closed caste institution. All lay clergymen and
many monastics were recruited from among the members of the
[582] families of lay clergy. Endogamous marriage was practiced
within this caste. The church maintained its own schools for
both the sons and the daughters of clergymen. In this manner
[184] the clergy had been separated from the rest of the society and
had developed a sub-culture of its own. The clerics were set
apart from others not only by their priestly garb, but by their
manners, and even by their names.

• 792 Internally, however, within the ranks of the Orthodox clergy
793 there was a sharp distinction between the monastic order (black
554 clergy) and the secular priesthood (white clergy). The monastic
order was rich in land donations and other possessions and all
the Church hierarchy was recruited from among its ranks. The
secular clergy was not only subordinate to the monastics, but
also poor. Among the secular clergy sharp class distinction ex-
isted between the city clergy and the village priests. This dif-
ferentiation was manifested in the differences in income, educa-
tion and prestige, as well as in the lack of intermarriage between
these strata. The difference was also reflected in the attitudes of
[369] the laity. While the city clergy were socially accepted by the mid-
dle and lower urban layers, the village priests were rather iso-
lated from the rest of the population.

However, the sharpest difference and social distance existed between the Church hierarchy and the rank-and-file clergymen. The heads of monasteries, for instance, behaved like real magnates. They took in large revenues, kept servants, horses and carriages, and hardly shared in the life of their monastic brothers, even though these Church dignitaries resided in monasteries. In the same way, the bishops were inclined to belittle the lay clergy under their control. They treated them with a great want of respect. They would abuse them, insult them and then even flog them.

1/1 [i.e. developing in the second half of the XIXth century — Analyst]

6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

It was this contrast between the alleged lofty calling of the minister of a privileged Church and his sad fate that must have depressed many a priest and made him bitter and resentful. Even before he became priest, while still a student in the divinity school, where he was educated at the government's expense, he was exposed to abusive treatment at the hands of his superiors. He was ill-fed, insufficiently clothed, and frequently beaten with the rod or lash. At one time these Church seminaries were so unpopular that children of the clergy had to be forced into them with the help of the knut and of the police. Embittered because of bad treatment, many of these young men nursed a grudge against their disciplinarians, as well as against the Church, the state, and the society at large. The instructors in these institutions, ill-paid and badly treated by their own superiors, were often as wretched and as discontented as their pupils.[2] In this manner the conditions in these institutions tended to reinforce feelings of rebellion which were nursed in the family.

As a result of such circumstances, Russian-Orthodox seminaries became a fertile ground for revolutionary political propaganda which was spreading with an increasing intensity in all the middle schools and universities of the Czardom ever since the abortive uprising of the Decembrists.[3] In this manner many Russian-Orthodox seminaries became hot-beds of subversive radicalism. Mutinies occurred and even attempts to assassinate rectors.

In the meantime, however, that is since 1869, services other than priesthood were opened to a priest's son. Since then the most rebellious youths from divinity schools and priestly families tended to leave church calling and engage in other activities. It was from among such rebels that many Russian revolutionaries were recruited. Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov among the "Nihilists," Nechaev among the Terrorists, Stalin among the Bolsheviks, are only a few outstanding examples in a long list of Russian professional conspirators and revolutionaries. Said Stalin:

> In protest against the humiliating regime and the jesuitical methods that prevailed in the seminary, I was ready to become, and eventually did become, a revolutionary, a believer in Marxism . . .[3]

[3] [i.e. in December, 1825 -- Analyst]

6. Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

(*S bedoyu ne perekoryaisya, terpi!*). And then if life is all suffering, why be afraid of death, he would ask himself. "Be afraid to live, do not be afraid to die! To live is more terrible than to die"; "We do not rejoice in life, but in death."[10]

Identification with suffering and preoccupation with death which has been conditioned by family experiences and reinforced on the community level led the Russian peasants to practice long and hard fasts, and to undertake difficult pilgrimages to far off places of worship. "There is only one salvation, fast and prayer"; "We don't live on bread, but on prayer" they would say. Long and hard fasting and prayer of the Great-Russian peasants were not only manifestations of his identification with suffering and his feeling of helplessness and complete dependency upon superior forces, but were perhaps also expressions of his tendency to completely retire from an unsatisfactory and an unhappy world.

The extremes of this suffering and withdrawal from the world were reached by anchorites who sought complete solitude in wild deserts "far away from men," and by those hermits who lived self-buried in the catacombs, away not only from man, but also from the light of day. Such people enjoyed among the peasants the fame of saints and were believed to possess miraculous powers. Many peasants would make vows of pilgrimage to places where such people lived self-buried, isolated and withdrawn from all human contact.

III

The peasant's complete submission to unpredictable and arbitrary forces was enhanced because of the lack of solidarity among the peasants themselves. After the peasant had been subjected to arbitrary regimentation and to permanent policing on the part of the authorities, he began to lose faith not only in the authorities but in his fellow peasants as well. Thus mistrust and suspiciousness rooted in patriarchal relations were heightened. In such circumstances the peasant became increasingly distrustful of his neighbors, tended to withdraw within his own family and to become himself ready to spy on others.[11]

In such conditions when isolated, helpless and self-oriented,

6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

795 156 Another manifestation of withdrawal from degrading oppression was expressed by the *Molchalniki* (speechless) or *Bezslovestnye* (mutes), the sect whose members refused to speak. The moment one would join this sect he would suddenly become dumb and nothing could force even a syllable from his lips. The government was unable to obtain any information from such voluntary martyrs,[12] even under extreme torture.[13] The Theodosians and the Denisovtsy manifested feelings of dejection and withdrawal by means of complete asceticism. These sects demanded celibacy and abstinence not only from bachelors, but from married people as well. ("Let the unwedded wed not, the wedded separate"). The members of these sects therefore [792] founded settlements which were organized along monastic lines, where they attempted to live a solitary life of complete seclusion in the wilderness, and far away from worldly authorities.[14]

On the other hand, some sects apparently reacted to the existing unsatisfactory conditions by various forms of destructive aggressiveness, including self-destruction. The *Skoptsy* (castrated), for instance, practiced castration and mutilation of sex organs.[15] Other sects preached and practiced mass assassination and mass immolation. The *De'oubiytsy* (infant-killers), preached and practiced infanticide. The *Dushilshchiki* (stranglers) or *Tyukalshchiki* (clubbers) preached and practiced killing of adults.[16] Other sects, such as the *Samoszhigateli* (self-cremators) of *Morelshchiki* (self-immolators), organized mass immolation. Cases of such acts of extreme destructiveness have occurred until the end of the nineteenth century, and in the most different and distant parts of the Empire where the Great-Russians are settled.[17] As among the Anarchists, there was among these people an urge for pan-destruction:

[304]

> I wish that all Romanov, every man, wife, and child, would come to the banks of the Volga, throw themselves into the waters, and sink to the bottom so that the temptations of the world should not attract them. And what is even better: that I might set fire to and burn down the entire city;—what joy if it were to burn from end to end destroying all the aged and infants, so that none could receive the stamp of Antichrist.[18]

6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

792 one of the outstanding tenets in the philosophy of Russian monas-
829 ticism whose history is even longer than that of the Czardom was
577 [795] charitable love. Many sects of the *Raskolniki* propagated and
practiced principles of humaneness. The Slavophils were espe-
829 577 cially prominent in advocating the return to an idealized state-
less society of benevolent paternalism where brotherhood, Chris-
[177] tian love, and compassion would reign. The "Westerners"
endeavored to introduce into Russia Western concepts of justice
and tolerance, and a humanistic, libertarian and juridical state.
Russian belles-lettres, Russian school textbooks, as well as laws
and regulations in the nineteenth century and up to the begin-
ning of World War I, bear witness to this trend toward Westerni-
zation and humanism.

178 661 In Soviet Russia, on the other hand, after a brief initial period
of reaction against the old regime which led toward an emphasis
on all-human values and equalitarian brotherhood, soon the
trend of events pushed the Bolshevik ideology in the opposite
direction. The determination of a ruling clique of professional
conspirators to maintain themselves in power by any and all
means dictated the emphasis on the internal and external
"threats" which would justify the intensification of internal
"measures of security," and of external aggression. Thus vigi-
lantism and war preparedness, and expansion of internal and
external Bolshevik power, became the main base of the policies
of the ruling class.[25] Such policies had to be constantly reinforced
by a deliberate incitement to hatred and destruction.

661 642 The image of Soviet society as being in a constant state of
war, not only against foreign enemies but against internal oppo-
sitionists, deviationists, spies, saboteurs, and remnants of bourgeois
mentality has been determined by a social structure which the
Bolshevik rulers themselves have created, but which makes their
own power uncertain and precarious. In such circumstances
Lenin's idea of a life and death struggle with the "class enemies,"
the idea that "it's them or us" (*Kto kogo*) has provided the main
motivating force of the Party's internal and foreign policies.
Fearing to be annihilated unless they themselves destroy their
enemies, conscious that they have "either to rule or to die," the
Bolsheviks have ruthlessly applied the principle of "obedience

10: French S-4 (no date) 1951 E16 Slavic Peoples
Great Russia RF1

781 inspiration to the religious life of the West, the deaths of the princes Boris and Gleb had made an indelible impression upon the religious thought of Russia. In the interpretation put upon their fate by the Russian Church they became the type of voluntary acceptance of suffering. This aspect of their religion which works so powerfully beneath the surface in the thought of Russians, and leads them to look upon suffering, and especially suffering which is voluntarily accepted, not merely with compassion but with veneration, is not to be dismissed as no more than a manifestation of the melancholy inherent in the Slav temperament. It has its reinforcement, if not its foundation, in the Russian stress upon the "kenotic" Christ, the Christ who emptied Himself of His glory and accepted humiliation and suffering to the culminating point of voluntary death. It is this that makes the Russian regard human suffering and humility, not only suffering for Christ but the mere fact of following Christ in His experience of it, with a sort of admiration and reverence.

It is closely associated with the aesthetic approach to religion and with the sense of man's kinship with the natural world. It makes itself felt in the Russian's scale of values in the sphere of law and of ethics and indeed in his general view of life.

As Fedotov points out, of all the iconographic representations of the Virgin and Child which the Russians took over from the Byzantine Church, the type which they call "umilenie" became easily the favourite. It does not so much claim awe before the majestic dignity of the Mother of God, as express that complex emotional reaction of the human heart to innocence and beauty and pain, for which English has no single word.

The "kenoticism" of Russian religion is but one aspect of it, by its very nature it does not claim attention through any violent expression of itself in the world of affairs. But it is an aspect which must not be overlooked.

792 In Russia, as in the rest of the Orthodox world,[1] the monastic life has always exercised an immense influence. The life of a good monk is regarded as the Christian life *par excel-*

[1] See Chapter X.

10: French S-4 (no date) 1951 E16 Slavic Peoples
Great Russia RF1

792

lence and his cloister the place where in this world of sin one may meet with God. The great monasteries of Russia, and pre-eminently the Lavra of St. Sergius near Moscow, have been focal points where national aspirations have been gathered up and presented before the mercy of God. Thither multitudes of men and women have flocked with their individual troubles of a burdened conscience or an anxious mind or perhaps simply a hungry body.

The monk may not be a priest, indeed in most cases he is not, but it is to him that the devout will turn for guidance and direction in spiritual matters and to him they unburden their souls. The starets is a characteristic and significant figure in Russian religion. His name means "elder"; he is old in spiritual experience, and distinguished by his piety and gift for guiding other souls. A new member of the monastic community is entrusted to the care of a starets, who trains and teaches him, and devout lay folk living in the world will choose their starets, and resort to him as to a father confessor and director.[1]

[1] For a picture of a typical starets see the writer's translation of *The Way of a Pilgrim*. London, 1931. Another is Father Zossima in Dostoyevsky's novel: *The Brothers Karamazov*.